

Magazine Feature Section

INSIDE BASE - BALL' DISCOUNTED IN WORLD'S SERIES

Tension of Great Championship Games Causes Players to Go Back to Simple "Knock 'Em In" Principles of the Sport—Fine Points Like the "Squeeze" Play Which Can be Tried Every Day Through the Playing Season are Forgotten In the Big Series

"Inside baseball is a pretty thing to talk of, but when it comes to the world's series the team that is strongest in the three fundamentals of the game—pitching, hitting and fielding—wins.

The above statement made by a major league manager rather depreciates the exaggerated importance of scientific baseball as applied to a single series in which the tension is great.

It was this fact, this manager avers, which caused the Boston Braves to win over the Philadelphia Athletics in 1914. Considered on the year the Braves did not begin to play the superb quality of scientific ball the Macks displayed. Yet in a single series this ability to play brainy baseball availed the Macks nought for the pitching of the Braves—one of the fundamentals of the game—kept the Mack Men off the sacks and on those occasions when they did begin the circuit drive they depended upon hitting rather than fancy base running to drive their runs in.

It is for this reason, this manager believes, there never can be intrinsically an exorbitant favorite in a world's series no matter what the comparative reputations and records of the clubs may be up to the time the play for the world's title begins.

Once there are 40,000 fans howling and the players under a consequent high tension the game is deprived of its finish and reduced to the fundamental or back-lot stage in which the hitters merely try to hit and the pitchers to pitch.

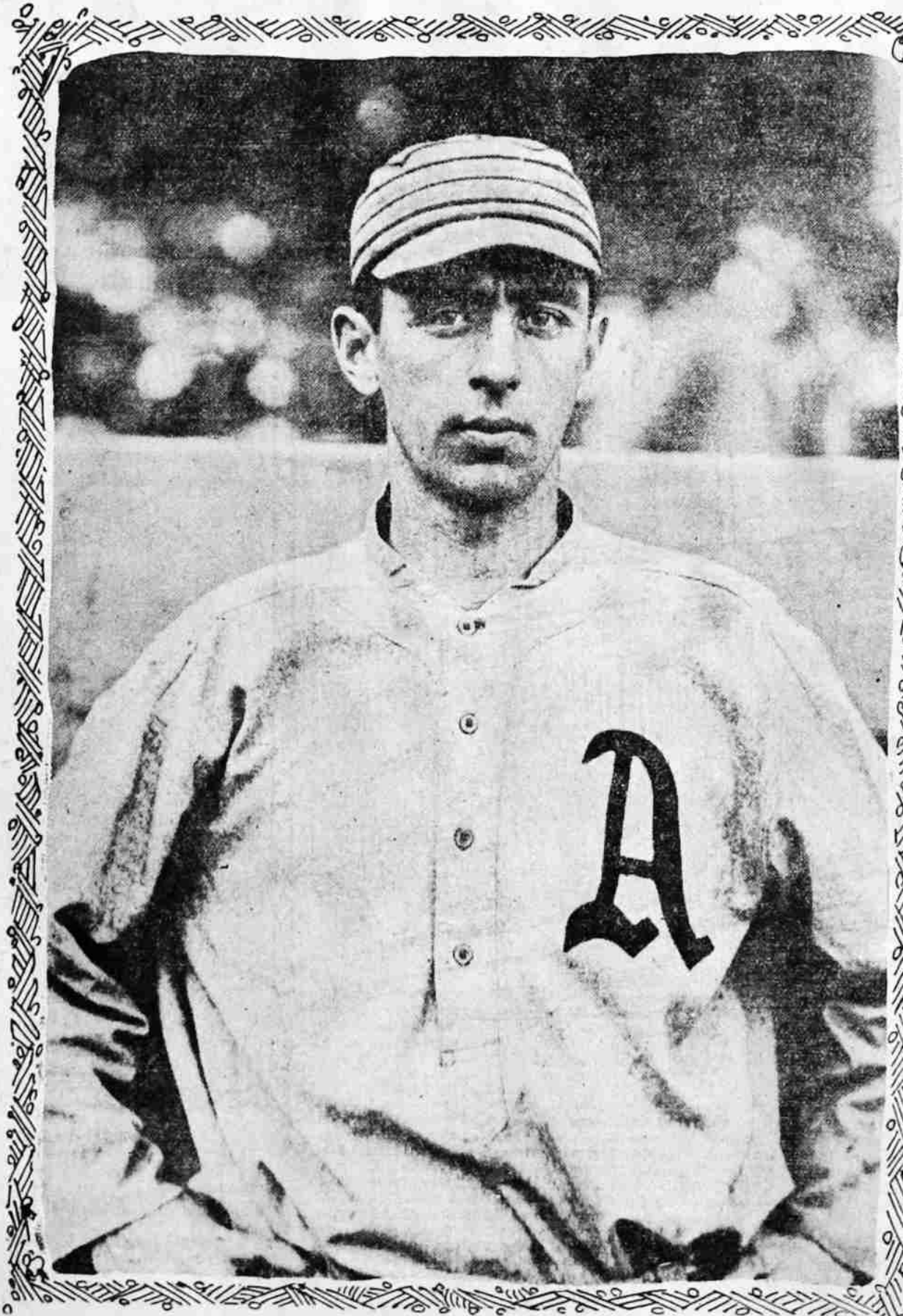
"How often, in a close world's series game, have you seen the squeeze play essayed?" this manager asks.

CASE IN POINT.

Indeed, how often? Probably never. Were one team far enough ahead to take a chance this highly scientific and artistic bit of baseball might be given a trial but where one run wins, when the series is short and the tension high the players and managers are going to depend upon the good old base knock to bring over the run that counts.

Were it otherwise, and were the most scientific team always to win it is difficult to see how the Philadelphia Mack Men of 1914 ever could be beaten. Likewise the Boston Red Sox in 1915 would, on form, have had the edge over the Philadelphia Nationals.

Yet all the vaunted team play and ability to hit-and-run of the Boston Red Sox was, before the series, offset by the fact that Alexander was known as a winning pitcher, a great pitcher—and pitching is one of the



JACK BARRY

fundamentals of the game.

"The combativeness of the Boston Braves and their pitching in 1914 successfully off-set all the superior science of the Mack Men," said this manager, a National league manager, by the way.

INSPIRED BASEBALL.

"The Braves were playing inspired baseball, but it was plain, every-day baseball with no frills to it. It was the kind of baseball the Braves had been playing from day to day.

"On the other hand Collins, Strunk, Barry, McInnis, Baker and the rest of the valiant Mack crew had been used to pulling fancy, or

scientific stunts, during their American league games. They figured the season was long and if an artistic play was broken up and the game lost they still had sufficient time to win the pennant for they were a great ball club even in the fundamentals of the game.

"But once in the world's series with the Braves, beset by the verbal fires of the Stallingsites and running into better than ordinary pitching they were thrown off what might be called their scientific or fancy stride and their plain game so greatly demoralized that they lost four in a row.

"World's series games are played

under terrific tension. I know players who do not sleep at all on the night preceding the opening game. These are dangerous fellows. They may go out and win a game with a single hit or in their highly nervous state they may "blow" a game away when most unexpected as Snodgrass did in 1912.

UNDER GREAT TENSION.

"Other players take a world's series much as they do any other series. Their nervous system resists all strain. They never see the crowd. They never hear it. Doyle of the Giants, Spack of the Red Sox and Cravath of the Phils are such players.



JOHNSON SLIDING TO FIRST



EDDIE MURPHY

"It all comes down to what the players call guts and that's as good a word for it as any other."

The world's series is too short to sufficiently establish the superiority of a team. The active baseball man admits the world's series is a nice "show," but of twenty critics not one would admit that a team's superiority over another could be satisfactorily settled in anything less

than twenty games.

It is noticeable in the team series of the regular schedule that an unexpected incident in an opening game may affect an entire series. To win the first game, most managers think, is the most important thing connected with a series and for this reason they invariably start their top-card pitchers on the first day of a new series.

Alexander all season long opened each series for the Phillies. Moran figured, and correctly with the first game won it gave his men the edge on the second. Cheney, in 1914, which was his big year, opened each series for the Cubs and Mathewson until he began to lose his effectiveness led off for McGraw.

THE PITCHER'S PART.

The first game of the world's series no doubt exerts a psychological effect even greater than in the regular seasonal play.

The views of the National league manager responsible for the foregoing leaves room for interesting deductions.

For instance, if the teams abandon their hit-and-run, "squeeze" plays and offensive tactics of like kind and do not attempt "delayed" steals, double steals and other bits of artistic base running that are of the regular baseball curriculum, it is obvious that the spectator is paying advanced prices to see baseball which is not a par with that he may behold during a regular game of the schedule.

But, it has been proved, that class in baseball is an entity that most generally escapes the majority of fans. What they want is a contest and a close score, or even better a close big score covers a multitude of technical sins.

For this reason the spirit of combat of world's series is in no wise affected because the teams do not play their regular game, but concentrate on the fundamentals of hitting, fielding and pitching.

Indeed the spirit of combat is even more rampant for the stake is larger, the crowds more excited, and the white light of publicity beats harder about this annual play.

But a man who is looking for baseball class will not go to a world's series to find it even though the teams competing are supposed to be the cream of the baseball universe.

War Trophies.

Curio dealers from England and from the continent are reported to be in the vicinity of battle fields in northern France endeavoring to buy trophies of the war which they hope in time may be valuable. They find, it is said, some difficulty in driving bargains. Amateurs who have come into possession of trophies sold them for high prices or will not sell on any consideration. It is recalled that after the American civil war came to an end a book-seller in the Bermudas, when the cargoes of the blockade runners in the harbor of Hamilton were sold at auction, bought a number of package cases without the least knowledge of their contents. Among these were several boxes of brass buttons consigned to the confederate army for use on soldiers' uniforms. Some twenty years later tourists discovered these old confederate buttons. A New York dealer made a high bid for the entire supply. This bid was refused, and these buttons, for which in the preceding years a small fraction of a cent was paid, have been selling at 25 cents and \$1 each.